

OCT 30 1992

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name McNeill House**other names/site number** David Armstrong McNeill, Sr. House

2. Location

street & number 220 Lee Street**city, town** Thomson

(n/a) vicinity of

county McDuffie **code** GA 189**state** Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 30824

(n/a) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- (x) private
() public-local
() public-state
() public-federal

Category of Property

- (x) building(s)
() district
() site
() structure
() object

Number of Resources within Property:

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	1	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	1	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0**Name of related multiple property listing:** n/a

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Signature of certifying official

10/22/92
Date

Elizabeth A. Lyon
State Historic Preservation Officer,
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

**Entered in the
National Register**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register

Delores Byers 11/27/92

☐ determined eligible for the National Register

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other, explain:

☐ see continuation sheet

for

Signature, Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC; single dwelling

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC; single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

International Style

Materials:

foundation	concrete
walls	concrete
roof	metal
other	glass block, cast iron

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The McNeill House is an International style house built in 1937. The house's design is by architect Edward Durrell Stone and was taken from the March 28, 1936 issue of Collier's magazine. The house sits on a rectangular corner lot in a residential area, with its front facade facing west. An open-pattern brick fence with four wrought-iron gates surround the lot on three sides (except where the fence joins the front facade). The lot is professionally landscaped. The house has undergone its first major restoration in 1989-1990. There are no outbuildings, except a swimming pool and small nonhistoric storage building.

Characteristic of the International style, the house is made up of simple geometric shapes and has a smooth stuccoed exterior finish. It is two-story with a basement and has a very low-pitched hipped roof behind a parapet wall that gives the appearance of a flat roof. The house is constructed of concrete and engineering brick in the foundation and basement, steel I-beams for the structural skeleton, and terra cotta hollow tile blocks covered with steel mesh lathing that is stuccoed outside and plastered inside. The house's original Pella casement windows are intact. Other windows consist of large areas of glass block and plate glass. A one-story garage is attached to the front facade. The upper story has both front and rear balconies with iron pipe balustrades, and the one-story roof areas serve as decks.

The following craftsmen did the original work on the house: Henry Hogan, a master craftsman, supervised construction of the house. Charles Blumquist, a master mason, did the terra cotta tile, brick, and glass block work. Carl Springer did the stucco and plaster work.

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Pella casement windows are used in the living room, kitchen, bedrooms, sun porch, den, and upstairs baths. The Pella casement windows appear from the exterior to be "ribbon windows", since they are in rows and look repetitive and vertically slender within the facade. The windows have interior retractable screens that retract up into the top of the window when not being used. This was the first year that the Pella Company made windows. The Pella casement windows and their hardware are original except for replacement parts in four windows, which the McNeills ordered from the Pella Company, in Iowa, during restoration. These replacement parts were found in stock from the 1940s inventory.

Glass block windows also create horizontal bands. A cylindrical, glass block wall curves around the dining room. Glass block windows are also used at the entrance to the house, upstairs hall, and in the baths. All glass block was replaced during the restoration in 1989-1990 with identical design and size to the original block.

On the first and second floors, plate glass windows are used at the rear facade of the house in conjunction with the Pella windows to open up the living quarters to view the outside and to let in light. The plate glass is used in the living room and enclosed sun porch on the first floor and in each of the three bedrooms on the second floor. The plate glass is original.

Low copings cap the parapet walls hiding the hipped roof, sun deck over the garage, flat roof over the dining room and walled areas on the decks of the second floor. This helps to give an appearance that all exterior horizontal surfaces are flat. The hipped roof is covered in standing seam metal.

The exterior rear porch/terrace is laid in individual precast concrete tiles, 19 1/2 inches square in shape. These are similar to the tiles found originally on the sun deck. The terrace tiles were restored, and the sun deck tiles will be replaced.

The curves on the exterior of the building contribute to the streamlined appearance of the International style. At the front, the second-floor balcony has a curved walkway that leads to the sun deck. A round window adds balance to the front facade. At the rear, the one-story, semicircular-end dining room and terrace provide a major curving surface.

According to the 1936 Collier's plan, the house was designed to have eight rooms and four baths; however, at the time of construction in 1937, the David McNeill, Sr., family made a few adjustments to that arrangement. The first-floor maid's room was never used for that purpose, and is called today a mud/utility room, with the two closets serving as a pantry. The maid's bath was never built; that space was

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absorbed into the original kitchen area. The first-floor sun porch was enclosed in 1947, making the house have nine rooms and three baths.

The following is adapted from the 1936 Collier's articles:

When Edward D. Stone designed this house plan for the "modernistic" standards of the International Style, he emphasized that the building should function to serve its inhabitants. The interior rooms were arranged the exact opposite of traditional standards practiced up to the 1920s.

The garage was set at the front of the house to save the distance of walking, as in earlier times, from the stable. A connecting passageway led to the front door. In the front of the house on the first floor, the foyer and hall area served as greeting room. To the right, the hall extended to the bath on the right, and dressing and closet spaces on the left. A guest room was at the far end of the hall, now used by the Thomas O'Shea McNeills as a den.

The living room and dining room were considered the most important rooms to the family unit and were placed at the rear with an abundance of windows so the residents could look out. To take advantage of the rear of the house as a family area with multiple windows, sunlight, and the beauty of garden space was thought to be of highest priority. It was a matter of taste to retain privacy at the front, with the house placed close to the street and with few windows for passersby to look in.

On the second floor, the family's main sleeping and storage space is provided with three bedrooms. The master bedroom has a private bath, and the two other bedrooms share a bath. Each bedroom has three closets, and the hall has three closets. Each bedroom has access through its own door to the rear deck.

The stair is cylindrical, with plaster stairwell wall, and original rope handrail which has always been covered with fabric. It is attached to the wall with the original chrome brackets. The stair has a low parapet guard wall at the top with a wide, flat, mahogany molding. The stairs are made of precast concrete steps, individually laid, which take on interesting stylistic designs. The steps are covered with carpet.

Looking from the living room to the stairwell, one can see part of an arch, like a half-barrel vault, which is a cover for part of the stairs. In the kitchen, likewise, the ceiling in the corner is accentuated simplistically by a section underneath the

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stairs. The ceiling displays two stuccoed steps plainly visible to the eye, next to the cellar door which opens to view the precast concrete stairs of the stairwell ascending to the second floor and descending to the cellar below.

The interior of this International style house features blank walls in smooth, white plaster. The dining room has two structural steel posts visible to the eye behind which is the curved glass block wall. All doors with their chrome hardware are original.

All flooring in every room of the house, including baths, kitchen, and mud/utility rooms, is of hardwood oak. However, in the restoration, the foyer area had a new floor cover laid of dark green, veined marble over the top of the oak. Similarly, the kitchen, baths, and mud/utility rooms have new floor coverings laid over the top of the oak. The house has carpet installed over the top of the oak in the other rooms, except for the sun porch which has terra cotta tile. The sun porch has the original terra cotta tiles, each measuring six inches square.

The house displays the handiwork of regional master craftsman Henry Hogan. He designed and built the fireplace of mahogany. A serpentine-shaped lintel overhangs the mantel which is inset with scalloped polished aluminum inserts, and bordered on each end with a single, mahogany, stylized motif. Black tile fills in the area surrounding the firescreen and the hearth. The firescreen of chrome is not original. The built-in mahogany bookcase has three adjustable shelves, and the fourth lower shelf has a hinged door with a knob that opens to a deep storage bin which goes down to the floor. Also, recessed lighting appears over the bookcase in the top of the mahogany frame. Hogan also crafted the mahogany stairwell molding which tops the guard wall on the second floor.

The baths are aesthetically pleasing with a "modernistic" exploitation of materials and colors. They are ornamented in the original Carrara glass, and have the original tubs with hardware. Original star-shaped metal washers provide ornament where screws are used in the bathrooms. (Basins and toilets are not original.)

The first-floor bath is cream-colored Carrara glass with black borders. This is the only bath with a shower stall. The second-floor master bath is a mint green Carrara glass with forest green borders and mint green tub. The third bath (end of the hall) is gray with black borders and a lavender tub.

The two upstairs baths have the original medicine cabinets in Art Deco style. They are unusual in that on the chrome frame of the mirror the protruding lights are adjustable, sliding up and down. Also, at the

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bottom of the chrome frame, a 110-voltage outlet provides electricity. The wiring is all in the swinging door of the medicine cabinet. Downstairs, is an original circular mirror in the bath which complements the exterior circular window on the same wall.

The bathtubs in the McNeill House were made by the Briggs Manufacturing Company, which primarily made automobile bodies for Chrysler Corporation. (Briggs applied the same extrusion process to tubs and sinks.) The tubs in the McNeill House were pressed out of a single sheet of steel and enamel-baked. The walls surrounding the tubs are Carrara glass and are arched above.

Other details include the original footlights on the stairwell to illuminate the upward path from the first to second floor. Also, the house had three rooms with built-in jacks to plug in a radio antennae.

The house's construction was as unusual and modern for its time as its style. First, the full basement was dug and a concrete floor poured. The basement was built of two courses of unfinished engineering brick forming eight-inch-thick walls. The house was constructed of eight-inch, structural steel, I-beams positioned vertically, then horizontally. The exterior and interior walls are 12x12x8-inch terra cotta hollow tile blocks, covered with steel mesh lathing, and stuccoed outside and plastered inside. The exterior walls are a total of 14 inches thick. The floors have 2x12-inch wooden joists, and every room in the house was floored with hardwood oak.

Drainage is managed in a variety of ways. The main hipped roof has three interior drainspouts; a hidden gutter system borders the rear upstairs deck; the upstairs rear deck has two exterior and one interior drainspout--one exterior is on the south corner and the other on the north wall of the semi-circular deck above the dining room; and, the garage has two exterior drainspouts.

The original heating system consisted of oil-fueled forced hot air. In the restoration, this was converted to natural gas heat. Originally, there was no air-conditioning, but this was added as soon as it became available. In the restoration, the system was split. Today, there are separate thermostats for climate control both upstairs and downstairs for energy conservation. The original plumbing is still used today as it was pure copper tubing.

Following the house plans issue of Collier's magazine, another article appeared later in order to help the consumer landscape the property. This one, dated April 11, 1936, was Collier's "What's a Garden for?" In it the front garden area is described as an entrance court. The rear is described as an outdoor garden, facing away from the street, and becomes a mural for the house, "...a necessary part of the living

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quarters of the house." This article was not strictly used by the McNeills for their landscaping, but the property is presently professionally maintained. The property slopes gently down the rear garden away from the house. Mrs. McNeill, Sr., had a rose garden where the swimming pool is now.

No outbuildings exist, although a swimming pool was added in 1971. A small modern storage building houses pool equipment.

The McNeill house was built in the most prominent area of Thomson's in-town residential district, alongside other houses dating from the 1880s to the present. Interestingly, Mr. Thomas O'Shea McNeill's brother, David McNeill, Jr., designed and built a house in 1939 across the street (on the south side, on West Hall Street) which could be described as "modernistic."

Very little has been altered from the original plans of the McNeill house. Following is a list of alterations:

- 1) In 1947, the sun porch was enclosed.
- 2) In the 1970s, the ceiling was dropped in the dining room and living room to hide developing moisture problems.
- 3) In 1989, the moisture problems in the McNeill House had become so bad and deterioration so evident that the Thomas O'Shea McNeills decided to undertake a major restoration. From Augusta, the architect Spiro Meimarides, of Upton Management Company, was hired to draw plans and supervise construction. He also designed four wrought iron gates for the brick fence.

Lawrence Construction Company, of Augusta, was hired to complete the work. The McNeills were vacated from their house for a total of 50 weeks while work was in progress. The following work was done:

A. The ceiling was returned to its original height. A partition built originally in the kitchen to make a breakfast area was removed, making the kitchen one large room per Collier's original floor plans.

B. Originally, Collier's magazine plans called for the front (west) second-floor balcony to have an iron balustrade. The McNeills, in 1937, built a glass block guard wall which did not work out for extreme weather. In the restoration, the architect suggested that the original design of the balustrade be returned, and the iron balustrade was installed.

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C. Originally, the Collier's plan called for the second-floor rear (east) deck to be bordered with a solid, parapet wall, and this the McNeills built, and can be seen in the historic photo. Due to drainage problems, in the early 1940s, the David McNeills, Sr., replaced this with a Monel-metal balustrade. (Monel is a combination of steel and another metal, which is non-corrosive and appears as highly polished. During the restoration, the Monel balustrade had to be removed to install the hidden, interior gutter system and downspouts. The Monel balustrade was replaced with an iron one to match the design of the one on the front.

D. The original three, structural steel posts are still on the rear terrace, but in the restoration they were boxed in and stuccoed to make square columns. This was done in order to accommodate the installation of the hidden gutter system and as a design improvement.

E. The work to take apart nearly all the glass block, repair it, and repoint it with its special grout was going to cost almost as much as replacing it, so the decision was made to replace all of the glass block with new. The new glass block is the exact pattern as the old and exactly the same dimensions. New glass block was used to make a work island in the kitchen.

Also, at this time, all utility cables were buried, including electricity, telephone, and cable TV, so that the wires would not distract from the white, smooth surfaces of the house.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): ☒ N/A

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture

Period of Significance:

1937

Significant Dates:

1937

Significant Person(s):

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Stone, Edward Durrell

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Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The McNeill House is significant as an excellent and rare example of an International style house constructed in Georgia in 1937. The house is significant in the area of architecture. This area of significance supports National Register eligibility under Criterion C.

In the area of architecture, the house is significant for its reflection of the modern design philosophy of the International style through its use of the most up-to-date construction materials and techniques, the asymmetrical composition of basic geometric forms, and the extreme simplification of details. This philosophy produced a house design that focused on efficient functioning as its guiding principle rather than decorative ornamentation.

The International style, which developed in the late 1920s in Europe, was first fully recognized in America in an exhibit held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932. Henry R. Hitchcock and Philip Johnson organized this exhibition and wrote a book to accompany it, entitled The International Style, giving the style its name. The features of this style include asymmetrical compositions of rectilinear forms, the use of large areas of glass, the love of smooth surfaces devoid of applied ornament, the juxtaposition of solid and void, and the contrast of angular and curved forms.

The McNeill House incorporates all of these principles and forms into an aesthetically pleasing design. The house is also designed to serve the needs of its residents with an asymmetrical and well-functioning floor plan. The family living areas are located at the rear of the house for privacy and open onto the rear terrace and yard. The front facade serves as a screen from the street to provide privacy for these living areas. The house is structurally significant for its modern construction techniques using structural steel I-beams, precast concrete, terra cotta tile block, glass block, plate glass, Carrara glass and the first Pella casement windows made.

The International style was rarely used in Georgia, especially for domestic buildings, due to the conflict of its radically different design approach with the state's more conservative architectural traditions and the popular stylistic revivals of the time. Therefore, the McNeill House is an extremely significant building with a statewide level of significance.

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The McNeill House is eligible under Criterion C as an excellent and rare example of an International style house constructed in Georgia in 1937.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

n/a

Period of significance (justification)

1937 is the house's date of construction.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The house is the only contributing resource on the property. The only other structures on the property are a very small storage shed and a swimming pool, both of which are nonhistoric and neither of which are counted.

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

Mr. David Armstrong McNeill, Sr., was born in 1871 in Chicago, Illinois, and grew up in his hometown. His father was Thomas McNeill, the father of nine children. Two of Thomas' children, David A. and Frank J., founded the McNeill Box Company, a manufacturer of wooden boxes, about 1900. Thomas McNeill worked with the company as lumber purchaser and inspector. One daughter and three other sons worked for the box company at one time or another.

David McNeill was a very bright young boy, ingenious from the start. He used to ride the streetcar to go to work at a pickle and condiment factory in downtown Chicago. Paperboys were allowed to ride the streetcar for free, so David would buy a dozen papers and sell them along the route. If he ran out, he simply got off the streetcar to get more papers until he got to work.

David was a self-educated man, completing only four or five grades of grammar school. But it was soon apparent that he was astute in business and successful with his personal life. While in Chicago his first wife, Louise Westphal, died. They had one son, David Armstrong McNeill, Jr. Later, David married Ellen O'Shea, and they had one son, Thomas O'Shea McNeill.

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The McNeill Box Company proved to be very profitable, because in those days, everything from a washing machine to an iron was packed in a wooden box. The company left Chicago following a fire, and searched for a place where labor was cheaper and raw materials were better available. The McNeills moved the company to Johnson City, Tennessee, about 1920. The company burned again in 1929, and this time the company moved to Thomson, Georgia, about 1930. The company was there to stay.

David McNeill remained in Chicago during the company's moves and made his living primarily in the bicycle business. When the company moved to Thomson he, too, rejoined his brothers in the box business.

In all these years, David McNeill had the foresight to know that the box company could not provide a handsome living for two sons. So, with his business acumen and personable skills with people, he became a well-liked and respected entrepreneur of his day.

Some of David McNeill's ventures were that he rose through the ranks of the pickle/condiment factory to become president of that company which was later sold to Monarch Foods. He was the president of Chicago Cycle Supply Company, the national midwestern distributor for Schwinn Bicycles. He also served as a director of the National Wooden Box Association, of which his son, David, Jr., and later his grandson, Donald, were presidents.

In yet another organization David McNeill played a leading role as secretary of the Anderson Spark Plug Corporation. This company made spark plugs of glass and steel which were ideal for high-powered automobiles, motorcycles, and airplanes.

While in Chicago, he became a member of the Park Ridge Country Club and the Illinois Athletic Club. He was a past master of the Lincoln-Park Masonic Lodge in Chicago and also a member of the Medinah Temple (Shriner). He was a close, personal friend of the actor Johnny Weismuller, of the famed "Tarzan" series.

David McNeill perhaps made a wrong investment when he began drilling for oil in Oklahoma. Again he rose to a leadership position as president of the Illinois-Oklahoma Petroleum Corporation. But this time, he was not successful. He literally lost everything he owned, a vast fortune, and was forced to start over at age 55.

However, David McNeill returned to the box business, which was now the lifeblood of the family. He moved to Thomson in 1930 to forge a new future.

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Mr. and Mrs. David McNeill were both active in community affairs in Thomson. Mrs. McNeill established the Queen of Angels Catholic Church, giving the first building in which the congregation met and held services. Mr. McNeill was an elder in the Thomson Presbyterian Church, and was a member of the Elks. Also, McNeill was instrumental in establishing the Thomson Board of Trade, of which he served as president. Later, the Trade Board became the Thomson-McDuffie County Chamber of Commerce.

In civic duties, David McNeill participated. He was a member of the McDuffie County Selective Service System's draft board. He also was an early supporter of the Boy Scouts of America in the Thomson community.

Secure with a stable position in the family box company, David McNeill was back on the path of hard work. He became president of McNeill, Lauff, and McNeill, box manufacturers.

It was during this time in Thomson that McNeill began to think of building a new home. A corner lot was purchased from Mrs. Rosa Neal, on February 14, 1936, for \$696.26, in the most prominent area of Thomson's residential district. The houses surrounding the lot were from all different periods of time.

About the same time, David McNeill, Jr., wanted to build a house in Thomson. It was actually he who first saw the Collier's magazine article, and subsequently, ordered the plans for \$3.00. He had already purchased a lot across the street from his parents and deemed that the lot was inappropriate for this house plan. His father, however, thought the plans were just what he wanted for a house.

With their progressive spirits, David and Ellen McNeill decided on the novel home. In the March 28, 1936 issue of Collier's magazine, Edward Durrell Stone, a distinguished architect of the contemporary International style, had been retained "...to draw plans of an ideal modern house for a man of moderate means." This was the house plan which the McNeills chose to build.

The McNeills started planning their house right away, and building the next year in 1937. Soon, controversy began about the unusual home. Thomson residents had never experienced any construction project such as this one! First, a basement was dug, concrete was poured for the floor, and then engineering brick was put into place for the basement walls. Then, gigantic steel I-beams were brought in and positioned with a crane vertically first and horizontally second. Hollow terra cotta tile blocks formed the core of the walls over which plaster was put on the inside and stucco on the outside. The wooden floor joists were put into place, and oak hardwood flooring laid everywhere.

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Precast concrete steps in the stairwell, precast concrete tiles, crankshaft casement windows, plate glass, Carrara glass, and glass block were all used in the house. All of these strange new materials were being combined for home construction!

The craftsmen who completed the McNeill house were the best that could be found. Henry Hogan was a master builder. In 1914, he had completed the most prominent building in Tignall, Georgia, then a thriving town. A cornerstone in this building attributes the work to Hogan. The building was actually a complex of a hotel, Bank of Tignall, professional offices, and a U. S. Post Office. Hogan probably built the McNeill House, with some of its details designed by him, towards the end of his career.

In addition to being the constuction supervisor for the McNeill House, Hogan designed and built the intricate fireplace mantel of mahogany and polished aluminum and the built-in bookcase with a unique storage bin. He also finished the stairwell with a mahogany molding.

Charles Blumquist, a Swede, was a master mason, and employed many processes he learned in Scandinavia to complete the terra cotta tile, brick, and glass block work. He was brought to this country by a Thomson native, the late Admiral Richard E. Hawes to build his personal home in New London, Connecticut. Later in life, Admiral Hawes moved back to Thomson and brought Blumquist with him to do the masonry work on his new home. This home has since been demolished.

Although not much is known about him, Carl Springer was employed to do the plaster and stucco work. With the style of the McNeill house, with its smooth expansive surfaces, this was quite a job. Nathan Kennedy also served as a laborer on the construction site and still resides in Thomson. He was paid a \$1.25 wages per day.

When the house was finished, the McNeills moved into the lovely structure in April 1938. For years, the McNeills raised their younger son, Thomas O'Shea McNeill, entertained their friends, and had many social functions there. There are two historical photographs from that time, one just after completion in 1938 or 1939, taken from the rear. You can see on the first floor the open sun porch and round steel columns and, on the second floor, the solid deck parapet wall. There is another photo from February 1940 showing the front corner, from the northwest angle. Although not shown in photographs, Ellen McNeill kept a rose garden at the rear of the house, where the swimming pool is now.

Unfortunately, the plans which had been ordered from Collier's magazine for \$3.00 burned in a fire at the box company. There have

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been no fires in the McNeill house. Its construction renders it virtually fireproof.

The house in 1937 cost the amazing sum of \$12,000 to build during the Depression years. Since David McNeill was in the box business, he got a lot of his materials at cost as a dealer. In David McNeill's lifetime, this mortgage was paid off.

As an interesting note to the history of the property, there is an identical house on the National Register, the Wallace-McGee House, in Columbia, S. C. It was built in the same year of 1937 when the McNeill house was begun. Thomas McNeill remembers that he and his mother and father visited owner Charles A. Wallace while the Columbia house was under construction. They knew of the house from one of David, Sr.'s friends, Dr. Jim Wilson, a physician from Thomson, who noticed the house being built on a trip to Fort Jackson in Columbia. In the 1980s, the Thomas McNeills visited the Columbia house and its new owner, as well.

There are some differences in the two houses. The David McNeills used the suggested materials in the plans for building the Thomson house, and currently furnish the house with appropriate contemporary furniture. No Carrara glass was used in the Columbia house, and some different materials were used.

The family's taste ran along the same lines, as David McNeill, Jr., designed and built a modern house in 1939 across the street on West Hall. He, too, was prominent in the box company and with civic and social affairs. His son, David III, is an executive of Southern Bell, and David IV, a missionary in West Africa.

On August 5, 1952, David McNeill, Sr., after his varied and brilliant life, died at age 80, having lived in Thomson for 22 years. His wife, Ellen O'Shea then inherited and lived in the house until her death on February 12, 1961.

David McNeill's younger son, Thomas O'Shea McNeill, then inherited the house. He, with his son and daughter, Tommy and Sheron, became the second generation of McNeills to live in the house. Presently, Thomas O'Shea McNeill and his wife, Lynn Cauthen McNeill, and her son, Emerson Grant Norman, live in and care for the house, hosting relatives and friends to this day.

Thomas O'Shea McNeill was six years old when his family moved to Thomson in 1930. When construction started on the house, he was age 13. There is a historic photo of the house in which Thomas O'Shea McNeill is shown standing in back of the house upon his graduation from high school. He was sent at the early age of 16 to college at

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The Citadel, in Charleston, S. C., and at age 18 was called to active duty in World War II. At age 19, McNeill had advanced to a Second Lieutenant in the Air Corps, piloting planes over the Pacific.

Following the war, Thomas McNeill returned to Thomson and became associated with his brother, David, Jr., in the family box company. Thomas O'Shea McNeill also carried on the family tradition of civic and religious activity, attending and providing support at the Queen of Angels Catholic Church. He was president of the Thomson-McDuffie County Rotary Club.

Taking early retirement from McNeill, Lauff, and McNeill, Thomas O'Shea McNeill continues today to be involved in various community volunteer efforts.

In 1989-1990, the Thomas McNeills realized that their treasured International style house was deteriorating and sought to protect it. They hired an architect and began a restoration of the house that took 50 weeks.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Floyd, Anne S. Historic Property Information Form, November, 1990.
On file at the Office of Historic Preservation, Georgia Department
of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, with supplemental
information.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) N/A

- () preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
has been requested
- () previously listed in the National Register
- () previously determined eligible by the National Register
- () designated a National Historic Landmark
- () recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- () recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- (x) State historic preservation office
- () Other State Agency
- () Federal agency
- () Local government
- () University
- () Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

n/a

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A) Zone 17 Easting 359880 Northing 3703890

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property follows the current legal boundaries of the residential lot on which the house sits, as shown on the enclosed tax map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the intact historic property that has always been associated with the house.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Debbie Curtis, Architectural Historian
organization Office of Historic Preservation, Georgia Department of
Natural Resources
street & number 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** October 13, 1992

(HPS form version 10-29-91)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

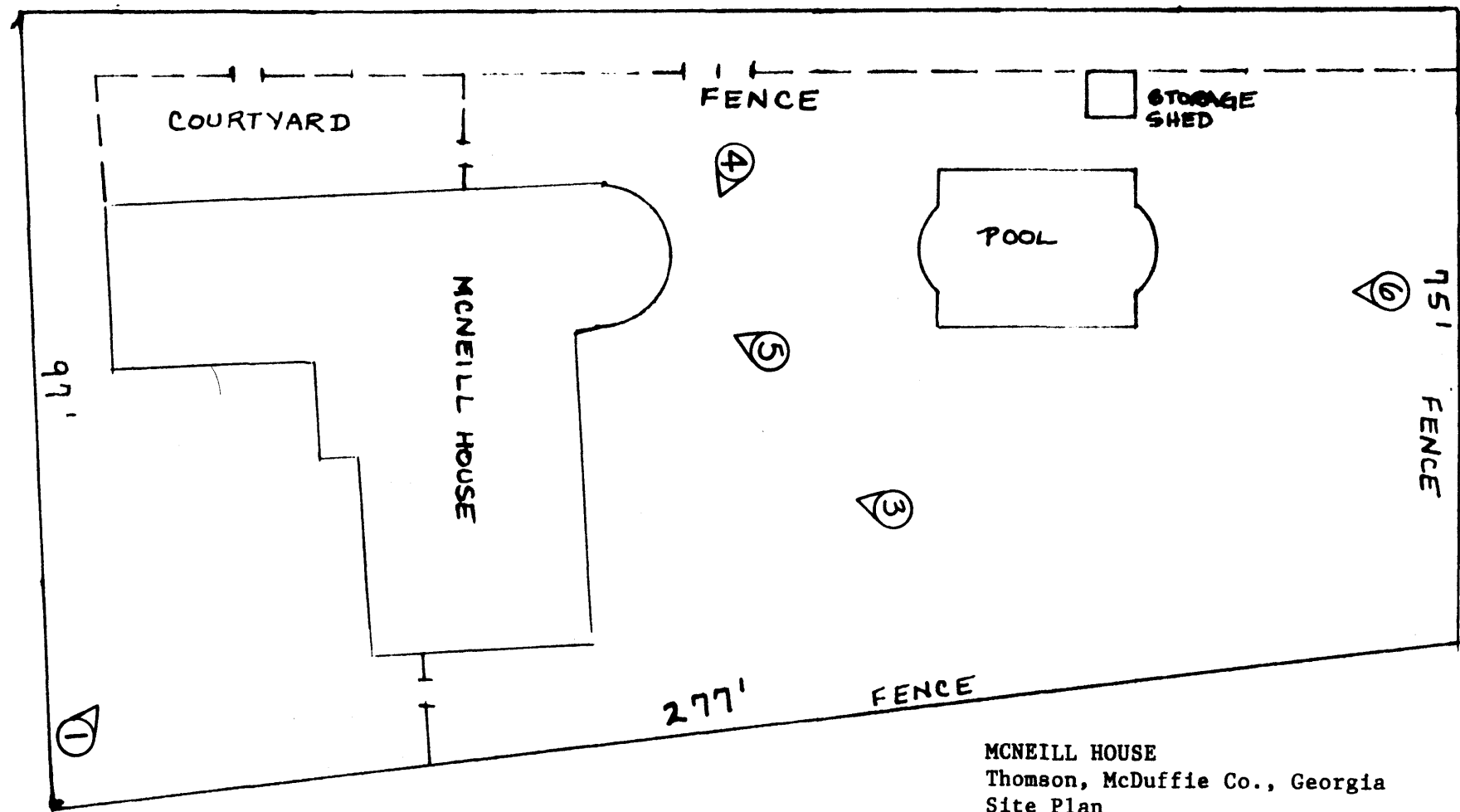
Name of Property: McNeill House
City or Vicinity: Thomson
County: McDuffie
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: August 1991

Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 13: Front facade; photographer facing north.
- 2 of 13: Side and rear facades and brick fence; photographer facing south.
- 3 of 13: Rear facade; photographer facing west.
- 4 of 13: Rear terrace and balcony and curved glass block wall of dining room; photographer facing south.
- 5 of 13: Curved glass block wall of dining room; photographer facing west.
- 6 of 13: Rear facade and yard; photographer facing southwest.
- 7 of 13: Entrance foyer and stairway; photographer facing south.
- 8 of 13: Living room, fireplace mantel; photographer facing south.
- 9 of 13: Living room, plate glass window; photographer facing north.
- 10 of 13: Dining room with curved glass block wall; photographer facing northeast.
- 11 of 13: Second-floor stair landing; photographer facing northwest.
- 12 of 13: Second-floor master bedroom; photographer facing north.
- 13 of 13: Second-floor bath; photographer facing southeast.

HALL STREET ②

LEE STREET



MCNEILL HOUSE
Thomson, McDuffie Co., Georgia
Site Plan
Property Boundaries: ———

Photo/Direction of View: ○

Scale: None

North: ↗

SITE PLAN
McNEILL HOUSE, THOMSON, GA
1990
McDUFFIE COUNTY



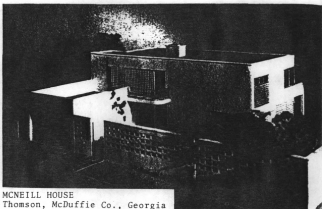
MCNEILL HOUSE
Thomson, McDuffie Co., Georgia
Tax Map

Property Boundaries: 

Scale: 1"=100'

North: 

The time when you had to arrange your life to suit your house is past. Now you can begin with your requirements for living and build your house to fit them. That's what "modern architecture" means. And here is an example. Collier's retained Edward D. Stone, a distinguished modern architect, to draw plans of an ideal modern house for a man of moderate means. Experts in other fields, taking full advantage of the newest materials and the latest devices, have collaborated to make it the last word in efficiency, economy and charm. In later articles the house will be landscaped, decorated and lighted. Here Mr. Flynn proudly shows you Collier's house



MCNEILL HOUSE
Thomson, McDuffie Co., Georgia

Original house plans by
Edward Durrell Stone from
Collier's magazine
March 28, 1936

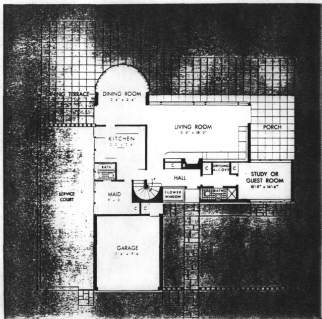
A Good Place

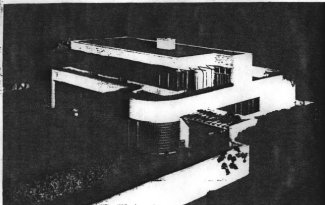
THOSE politicians who are bawling about the country now talking about plans to make Americans a peaceful and contented people are wondering with something they little understand. For Americans seem never to be contented unless they are dissatisfied.

At least America is never prosperous when it is satisfied. When it is satisfied with its houses, its cities, its laws, its resources, its parks, its horses and bargains, it drops right into a depression. When it gets dissatisfied with what it has and proceeds to take vigorous measures to get something better, the depression departs. The men who end depressions are the men who plant the divine spark of dissatisfaction in our minds.

Edison made practically everybody in America dissatisfied with the oil lamps and kerosene burners. The motor makes everybody dissatisfied with the horse-and-carriage man, the blackboards and the dust roads. Can it be that, all of a sudden, we are about to develop a radical dissatisfaction with our houses? Can it be that we are about to start flinging most of our outworn outcrares on the scrap heap with the student lamps and barouches of yesterday? What? You don't believe it?

Well, just hunt up a picture of Main Street and Market Street back in the our nineteen-tens. Lay it alongside a picture of the same Main and Market Streets today. Then ask yourself what has become of all those gaudy business blocks—the Masonic Temple, the Emporium, the Grand Hotel, and those solid three-story office buildings where the lawyers, dentists, insurance salesmen and blue-sky merchants had their lairs? Somewhere back in the late twenties an American architect learned how to use the newly developed technique of steel construction to build skyscrapers—mighty six- and ten-story towers, and presto! We called in the wreckers and put them to work reducing all those crowd business blocks to heaps of brick and plaster. And made work.

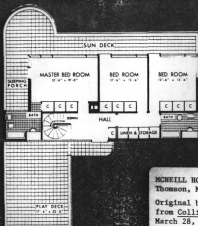




At the top of the opposite page you see Collier's house as it would appear from the street; the garage on the front where it is easy to drive in and out, an entry court that makes an outside door living-room, a play deck, above the garage, a band of glass brick to light the upper hall and stair well. On this page you see the house from the privacy of the garden, with bedrooms, living-room and dining-room all enjoying the view. Plenty of deck space and terrace. That's glass brick again, set in the curve of the dining-room to give more light and yet avoid a goldfish bowl effect. Everything works and has its purpose, but the result is now the less charming and livable.

to Live By John T. Flynn

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEORGE H. VAN ANCA



rooms and ornamentations of the past began to create a new style in house design. You know it. You know its flat planes, its gleaming surfaces of color, its severely simple lines. You call it the modern house. You may not like the modern house. But it has an idea behind it of which the exterior design is a mere incident. It has been called a "machine for living." That is the revolutionary idea which is hidden away in this new architecture.

In the old kind of housebuilding, we settled upon a type of house—Colonial or Spanish or Old English or what-not—and then arranged our rooms inside as well as we could. We were limited at the start by the exigencies of the settled design. Now in the new technique of housebuilding, the architect proceeds in the reverse order. That is, he settles on the rooms desired, the location of the rooms and the uses to which they are to be put. If you can imagine such a thing, visualize a house built without any exterior walls, but all the rooms put in precisely the places we want them without reference to the exterior shape or design. Having done this, what you would have would be a nest of rooms. The modern architect then proceeds to put a shell over them, which is the exterior of the house. The modern style lends itself to this, for the architect can give beauty of line and form to any shape this shell falls into.

But the big idea is that the house is all but with ped arm to the red-erly site size last

MCNEILL HOUSE

Thomson, McDuffie Co., Georgia

Original house plans by Edward Durrell Stone
from Collier's magazine
March 28, 1936